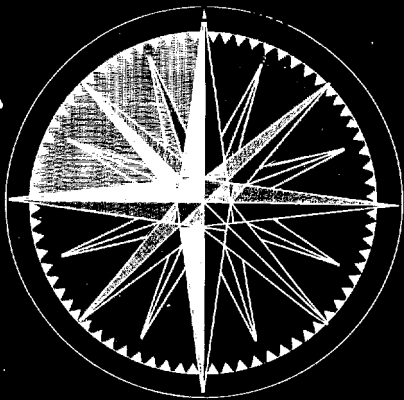


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SPECIAL REPORT

SOUTH AFRICA ON THE EVE OF ELECTIONS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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SOUTH AFRICA ON THE EVE OF ELECTIONS

South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd is expected to lead the National Party (NP) to an increased parliamentary majority in the general elections on 30 March. The white voters' approval of his stand on Rhodesia and the opposition's ineffectiveness assure a continuation of the present government and its policies. Several current and pending international problems will test South Africa's ability to keep at bay the African nations calling for an end to white rule in southern Africa. Verwoerd has reluctantly become involved in the Rhodesian crisis and faces the prospect of an adverse ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on South Africa's Mandate in South-West Africa. The future independence of three adjoining Bantu nations may further complicate matters.

National Elections

The NP held 105 of 156 seats in the previous House of Assembly, and used this majority in gerrymandering constituencies to improve its chances in the coming election. In the process the House has been expanded to 166 seats.

The opposition United Party (UP), which held 50 seats, lacks dynamic leadership and a real alternative policy to Verwoerd's apartheid (racial separateness.) It is losing ground to the NP even in many traditional UP districts. The dichotomy between the Afrikaner NP and the predominantly English-speaking UP, which formerly served as the basis for a two-party system in the white-ruled state, has been reduced by the increasing white support for Verwoerd's efforts to preserve the Europeans' preferential position.

Helen Suzman, the only representative of the relatively liberal Progress Party (PP) and the government's only effective critic in Parliament will probably not be re-elected.

Two recently formed racist parties are opposing the NP from the right. They are not likely to win any seats this time, but they have considerable future potential for playing on the whites' racial fears.

The nonwhites, who make up 81 percent of the South African population, have no voting rights in the national elections. In a separate election, the mixed-blood "Coloureds" in Cape Province will elect four white representatives. South Africa's Communist Party was outlawed in 1950. The various nonwhite subversive organizations, with few current assets inside the country, are forced to operate from weak positions abroad.

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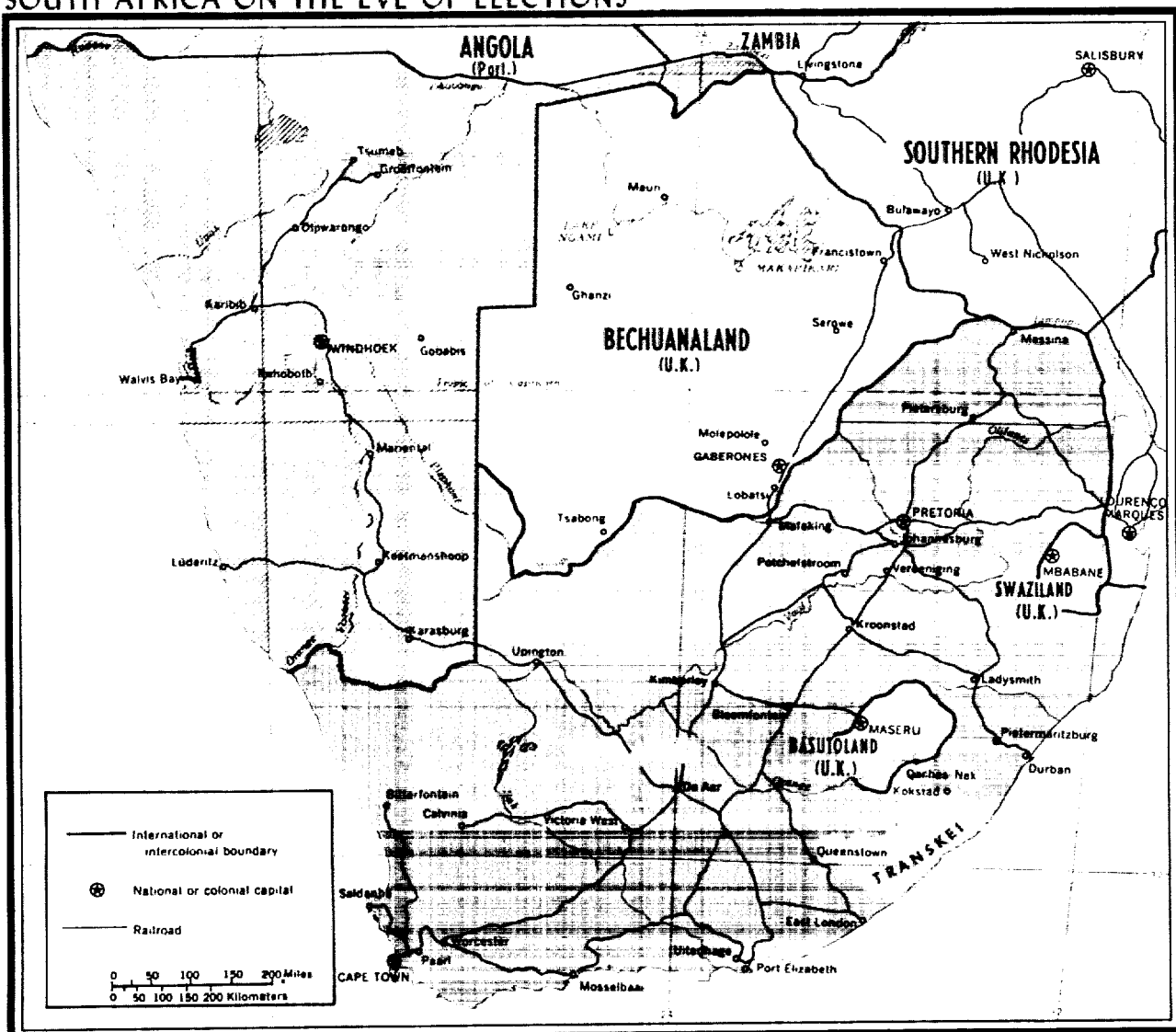
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Rhodesian Crisis

Verwoerd has won wide support in the white community by his delicate handling of the Rhodesian problem. His policy balances several conflicting pressures: the emotional identification of most white South Africans with Ian Smith's rebel regime; the need to preserve amicable relations with Britain,

which is leading the campaign against Smith; a fear of being identified abroad as Rhodesia's sole prop, a development which could lead to increased pressure for sanctions against South Africa; and apprehension that the successful use of sanctions against Rhodesia might set a dangerous precedent for those who want to apply sanctions against South Africa.

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Initially, Verwoerd probably thought that Smith could survive without much help from Pretoria. The UP, however, immediately seized upon the Rhodesian crisis as an election issue and has been accusing Verwoerd of coolness toward the embattled Europeans of Rhodesia.

For the first three months after the Rhodesian declaration of independence, Verwoerd followed a policy of minimal official involvement. South Africa, he said, would pursue a policy of "business as usual," i.e., it would not participate in sanctions against Rhodesia and would trade with all comers--Zambia as well as Rhodesia. It was not immediately clear whether "business as usual" implied freezing trade at previous levels and discouraging private efforts to send strategic materials such as oil to Rhodesia. Verwoerd also presented himself as a statesman pursuing South Africa's own national interests and--ironically for an Afrikaner nationalist--devoted to the preservation of its close relationship with Britain.

When by mid-February Smith had still not broken the oil embargo, Verwoerd, with his customary good timing in domestic politics, further deflated the UP's sails by clarifying his policy a trifle. "Business as usual," he said, did not preclude normal efforts to increase trade, and any limitation of goods shipped to Rhodesia would amount to South African partic-

ipation in the boycott. Individual whites all over South Africa took this as the green light for an oil-for-Rhodesia campaign. This drive has resulted in the shipment of private contributions of oil. Although quantities thus sent are small, compared with Rhodesia's requirements, amounts have been discreetly sent by firms which seized the opportunity to profit from the situation. Oil from South African sources has not yet been enough to meet even the minimal needs of Rhodesia, but it has stretched the Rhodesian reserves and taken some of the pressure off the Smith government's efforts to find a regular supply of its own.

Despite Verwoerd's evident belief that South Africa should help preserve white rule in neighboring territories, he apparently will try to keep his government's official involvement to a minimum. The scope of the involvement will be governed by a desire to avoid pressure for increased sanctions against South Africa.

South Africa has been able to stand up well against the sanctions already imposed because of its racial policies. The UN-sponsored military equipment boycott has been ineffectual, in spite of participation by most major nations, because of the advanced munitions and armament industry in South Africa and the design and production assistance of France and Italy, which are not fully participating in the boycott.

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The trade boycott imposed three years ago by the Afro-Asian and Communist countries has only produced pinpricks in the South African hide. Verwoerd fears only Anglo-American action similar to those measures being applied against Rhodesia as a result of Afro-Asian pressure. The bulk of South African trade and foreign investment comes from Britain and the US.

Decision on South-West Africa

If the situation in Rhodesia should be at a fever pitch at the same time the ICJ promulgates an unfavorable decision on South Africa's mandate in South-West Africa, which is expected this summer, other African nations would increase their agitation for reform in South Africa.

Article 2 of the League of Nations Mandate of 1919 requires that South Africa "shall promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and social progress of the inhabitants" of South-West Africa. The ICJ held in 1950 that the mandate issued under the League of Nations remained valid notwithstanding the league's demise. It is now deliberating charges brought in 1962 by former league members, Ethiopia and Liberia, that South African administration of South-West Africa violates the terms of the mandate.

South Africa has made a far abler presentation of its case

than have the lawyers representing the plaintiffs. Most observers nevertheless believe that the decision will go against the South Africans in view of political influences which may affect the judges. The court may, however, allow South Africa room to maneuver and delay implementation of any recommended reforms.

Other African nations are likely to use the decision as a battle standard in their efforts to terminate the practice of apartheid in South Africa. Some are likely to call for Security Council action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter by declaring the improper administration of South-West Africa a threat to peace demanding military or economic sanctions, or both.

Pressure would quickly center on Britain and the US. As permanent members of the Security Council their votes would be essential for approval of any sanctions. As South Africa's top trading partners and the source of most of the country's outside capital, their full support of economic sanctions would be vital to make them even partially effective. In the military sphere the African nations are also likely to be ineffective by themselves against South Africa's well-trained and well-equipped forces.

Independence of High Commission Territories

Verwoerd's interpretation of apartheid as a racial policy allowing

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separate but equal development of native areas will be tested as Bechuanaland, Basutoland, and Swaziland approach independence.. These almost totally African-populated states were long ruled by London through its high commissioner in Pretoria, and thus have been known as the High Commission Territories.

Bechuanaland becomes independent as Botswana on 30 September. Basutoland and Swaziland are likely to follow in a year or two. These small nations will, however, depend upon South African good will to a degree not really commensurate with independence. Most of their trade will still be with South Africa, and a large part of their working force will continue to cross the border occasionally to spend six to ten months in the South African mines, industries, and farms.

The independence of these states nearly fits the theory of apartheid, which, at least in theory, allows for the eventual independence of small unproductive native areas in South Africa such as the Transkei within a federation with the remaining white regions. The critical difference is the actuality of complete de jure independence. Some consider this a threat to South Africa's domestic racial policy. The emerging right-wing opposition to Verwoerd in South African politics already considers his version of apartheid a dangerous departure from the old

"Baaskap" policy of keeping the African in his place. If Verwoerd feels forced to make further gestures to the right, he might blatantly offend the nominally independent neighboring states by refusing to grant their nonwhite representatives in South Africa the normal amenities. So far Pretoria has received no diplomats from black-ruled states. This would raise a perplexing dilemma for Britain, which would feel obliged to stand up for its former territories without forcing a showdown with South Africa.

Outlook

In general, only a surprising reversal in next week's elections would alter the Verwoerd government's course of entrenching itself behind the barriers of its own racial policy without regard for foreign criticism. Verwoerd's own efficient security apparatus is fully capable of quelling any manifestations of domestic discontent by the black masses. Despite the awkwardness in the approaching independence of the High Commission Territories, Pretoria is well able also to withstand pressure from other African states. It is girding itself also to survive if Western nations impose further sanctions, and the rising prosperity of South African whites suggests that Verwoerd will proceed confidently along established policy lines.

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